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**The Mind At Every Stage Has Its Own Logic:**

**John Dewey as Genetic Psychologist**

In his essay, *The Mind at Every Stage Has Its Own Logic: John Dewey as Genetic Psychologist,* Thomas Daniel Fallace, stated that scholars have debated that Dewey was a child-centered inductionist and discipline-centered social constructionist. Some scholars have argued that Dewey was positivist or an ironic historicist. Fallace argued that Dewey was neither one of them. Fallace stated that John Dewey was a pragmatic (practical) historistic and genetic psychologist. Dewey wrote a book called, *How We Think*. In his writings, Dewey talked about ontogenetic growth or individual growth and phylogenetic growth known as the growth of the human race. As a pragmatic historicist, Dewey believed that knowledge of the past should be introduced into a child’s consciousness of the makeup or structure of social life. Racial knowledge is knowledge of the past. Genetic psychology is when human evolution involves intellectual growth. That growth occurs in stages and each stage incorporates prior knowledge. Fallace argues that Dewey did incorporate the induction and deduction into his writings but he was not considered as an inductionist and deductionist alone. Dewey believed in meaningful learning. History is the foundation of learning ideas, events and human development/stages. Teachers must build a strong foundation for students to learn new knowledge and attaching it with prior knowledge. The mind at every stage of growth has its own logic. (Fallace, 2002)

In his writings, Dewey talked about “content” and “form.” Content or the subject matter has to be is introduced to all students. Form is introduced to children depending on their own level of development. For example, a person might what to talk about the content of Language Arts. Most people are taught how to read and write. First, children have to learn their alphabets and phonics. After they have mastered their alphabets and phonics, then they can develop new forms of reading such as sight words, high frequency words and grammar. Finally, when children have mastered all the above, then they will learn how to speak and read more fluently. According to Dewey, a preschool child cannot learn how to read fluency until they learn their basics and foundation. The primary and elementary school students can attach their prior knowledge of reading to new knowledge. Knowledge is progressive. The last form of knowledge is known as social constructivism. Social constructivism is known as democracy.

In Fallace’s article, Dewey talked about the primitive, savage and civilized stages of the race. In the beginning of human life, the baby is at his primitive stage. He has no knowledge or language. The baby walks on all fours until he can stand and walk on two feet. As the child develops, he reaches a savage-like stage. Children must learn how to be discipline. Finally, when the child requires full knowledge as an adult, he becomes civilized. Being civilized is considered to be inductive and being a savage or primitive is considered to be deductive. (Fallace, 2002)

Accordingly to Fallace’s essay, at first Dewey School students were not allowed to be independent thinkers. They were not allowed to form their own ideas to historical problems. Students had to study previous solutions to historical problems from other historians. Later, in his evolution, Dewey supported independent thinking. He stated that teachers should teach young children at their primitive stage before teaching them how to behave. Teachers should teach children how to be traditionalists before teaching them how to become modernists. Teachers should teach children how to be modernists before teaching them to be post-modernists. Dewey stated that each stage must be adequately lived though.

In conclusion, I enjoy reading Thomas Fallace’s perspective on John Dewey’s philosophy on education. In his book, the Experience of Education, John Dewey argued that schools have to be progressive not traditional. Traditional schools require no progress. It is repeated knowledge or knowledge with no growth. Progressive education is forever evolving. Dewey stated that schools should have freedom, purpose, growth, interaction, cooperative learning and continuity. Children should learn from and serve one another. From my experience, I attended schools that had a strong sense of community. Everybody knew each other from the neighborhood. However, formal education in the urban community was not good. Detroit Public School felt more traditional than progressive. Black History Month was not taught to my satisfaction. I got tired of hearing about what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have done. A lot of Black people have done many great things in life even the controversial ones. How come that was not taught in schools? Today, many African-Americans states that our history is not being taught in schools. In my opinion, if Black history is not being taught in schools, do not expect the elite to teach you. Educate yourself and free your mind.

As a teacher, I will encourage students to think for themselves. They should have freedom but not too much freedom without discipline. I will enhance cooperative learning and growth. Many students will learn more when they work together. Furthermore, knowledge does not end with formal education. Knowledge is forever continuing. The human body will stop growing but the mind never will stop learning. I will encourage Social Studies teachers to learn from John Dewey’s perspective on Education. The book, the Experience of Education, John Dewey stated that once we have a theory of experience, then educators can make learning more meaningful. From my perspective, Dewey’s perspective is great! His text is a must read book.

**Resource**

Fallace, Thomas. The Mind at Every Stage Has Its Own Logic: John Dewey’ Genetic Psychologist. Wayne State University ERIC system. 2002